

Message Text

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ACTION IO-14

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00
NSAE-00 NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 PM-05 H-01
INR-10 L-03 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ARA-10 EA-10
NEA-10 HA-05 /109 W
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FM AMEMBASSY CAPE TOWN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6899
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM
AMEMBASSY GABORONE
AMEMBASSY LAGOS
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY LUSAKA
AMEMBASSY MAPUTO
AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 CAPE TOWN 446

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINS, WA
SUBJ: NAMIBIA - MORE TOWNSHIP DISTURBANCES

REF: CAPE TOWN 403

SUMMARY: KATATURA TOWNSHIP REMAINS TENSE WITH ISOLATED
INCIDENTS FOLLOWING SIGNIFICANT DISTURBANCES ON
MARCH 5 AND 6 WHICH RESULTED IN FIVE DEATHS. DISTURBANCES
HAVE ALSO BEEN REPORTED IN HEREROLAND AND DAMARALAND.
MOST OF THE FIGHTING HAS BEEN BETWEEN OVAMBO MIGRANT
WORKERS WHO SUPPORT SWAPO, AND HERERO SUPPORTERS OF CHIEF
CLEMENS KAPUUNO OF THE DEMOCRATIC TURNHALLE ALLIANCE (DTA).
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SO FAR POLICE HAVE SHOWN CONSIDERABLE RESTRAINT,
BUT EFFORTS TO BEING AN END TO THE DISTURBANCES HAVE FAILED.
END SUMMARY

1. WINDHOEK SOURCES HAVE CONFIRMED FOR US SOUTH
AFRICAN PRESS REPORTS THAT ELEVEN MORE PEOPLE HAVE
DIED IN TWO DAYS OF DISTURBANCES IN NAMIBIA. FIVE

OF THE DEATHS OCCURED IN WINDHOEK'S BLACK TOWNSHIP OF KATATURA ON THE AFTERNOON AND EVENING OF MARCH 5. THE VIOLENCE REPORTEDLY BEGAN WHEN 300-400 SWAPO SUPPORTING OVAMBO MIGRANT WORKERS CONVERGED ON THE HERERO SECTION OF THE TOWNSHIP, DETERMINED TO AVENGE THE DEATHS OF TWO OVAMBOS KILLED IN A DISTURBANCE FOUR DAYS EARLIER (REFTEL). THE SIX OTHER DEATHS WERE IN THE HERERO HOMELAND CAPITAL OF OKAKARARA, WHERE HEREROS APPARENTLY VENTED THEIR ANGER AT THE KATATURA EVENTS ON THE SMALL OVAMBO MIGRANT WORKER COMMUNITY OF OKAKARARA. FOLLOWING THE DISTURBANCE THE OVAMBOS WERE MOVED OUT OF OKAKARARA TO ANOTHER NEARBY TOWN.

2. CCORDING TO PRESS REPORTS AND PRIVATE WINDHOEK SOURCES, THE LEVEL OF TENSIONS IN KATATURA REMAINS HIGH AND THERE HAVE BEEN SEVERAL INCIDENTS OF VIOLENCE TODAY (MARCH 7). AN EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBER OF THE NAMIBIA NATIONAL FRONT TOLD US THAT THERE HAVE ALSO BEEN UNREPORTED SPORADIC INCIDENTS OF VIOLENCE SINCE SUNDAY BETWEEN NNF AND DTA SUPPORTERS IN THE DAMARALAND CAPITAL OF KHORIXAS.

3. JUDGING BY PRESS AND PRIVATE REPORTS OF THE INCIDENTS, THE POLICE HAVE SHOWN CONSIDERABLE RESTRAINT IN ALL OF THE TROUBLED AREAS. THERE HAVE BEEN NO ARRESTS. UNDER ORDER OF THE ADMINISTRATOR
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GENERAL THE POLICE HAVE NOT USED FIREARMS, ALTHOUGH THEY HAVE USED TEARGAS TO DISPERSE CROWDS ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS. AN OFFICIAL AT SWAPO HEADQUARTERS ALLEGED PRIVATELY THAT POLICE HAVE NOT BEEN IMPARTIAL BUT HAVE INCITED THE HEREROS, MOST OF WHOM ARE FOLLOWERS OF CLEMENS KAPUUO, TO ATTACK THE OVAMBO HOSTELS, AND HAVE STOOD BY AND WATCHED THEM DO SO. SWAPO ALSO CHARGED THAT ARMED HERERO DTA SUPPORTERS WERE STREAMING IN TO KATATURA FROM OTHER PARTS OF THE COUNTRY WITH A VIEW TO CONTINUING THE DISTURBANCES. THIS ALLEGATION WAS PRIVATELY REPEATED TO US BY A NON-DTA KATATURA/HERERO RESIDENT. FOUR THOUSAND OVAMBO HOSTEL DWELLERS STAYED HOME FROM WORK ON MARCH 6 AND 7, REPORTEDLY OUT OF FEAR OF LEAVING THEIR COMPOUND IN THE ABSENCE OF POLICE PROTECTION.

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4. ORIGINALLY, THE FIGHTING APPEARED TO BE
POLITICALLY MOTIVATED, GROWING OUT OF THE FEB 28
SWAPO AND DTA POLITICAL RALLIES IN KATATURA (REFTEL).
IN THE LAST WEEK, HOWEVER, IT HAS INCREASINGLY TAKEN
ON TRIBAL OVERTONES. THE OVAMBO MIGRANT WORKERS ARE
VIRTUALLY SOLID SWAPO SUPPORTERS, WHILE MOST
OF THE HEREROS INVOLVED IN THE FIGHTING HAVE BEEN SUPPORTERS
OF CHIEF KAPUUO AND THE DTA. EACH OF THE
TWO SIDES HAS BLAMED THE OTHER FOR EXPLOITING TRIBAL
HOSTILITY AMONG THEIR LESS SOPHISTICATED SUPPORTERS.
THIS WAS CERTAINLY THE MOTIVATION BEHIND THE OKAKARARA
DISTURBANCE. ON THE OTHER HAND, THE SECRETARY GENERAL
OF SWANU, WHOSE SUPPORTERS ARE MAINLY HEREROS, TOLD US
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THAT SWANU IS NOW RELUCTANTLY BEING DRAWN IN ON THE
SIDE OF DTA IN THE DISTURBANCES AS A RESULT OF INDISCRIMINATE
SWAPO/OVAMBO ATTACKS ON THE HERERO SECTION OF
KATATURA.

5. SEVERAL UNSECEESSFUL ATTEMPTS HAVE BEEN MADE TO BRING

AND END TO THE DISTURBANCES. THE ADMINISTRATOR GENERAL VISITED KATATURA ON BOTH MARCH 6 AND 7 AND URGED RESTRAINT ON THE INHABITANTS, BUT APPARENTLY TO NO AVAIL. ON MARCH 6, A SWAPO DELEGATION MET WITH WHITE TOWNSHIP ADMINISTRATORS AND WITH THE REGIONAL COMMISSIONER OF POLICE IN ANOTHER USELESS EFFORT TO BEING AN END TO THE SPORADIC FIGHTING.

6. TO DATE THERE HAS BEEN COMMENT FROM SAG OFFICIALS IN CAPE TOWN ON THE INCIDENTS. A MARCH 7 "ARGUS" REPORT ON THE STATUS OF THE NAMIBIAN NEGOTIATIONS, HOWEVER, CITED THESE DISTURBANCES AS EVIDENCE OF THE "INCREASING POLITICAL POLARIZATION AND DISINTEGRATION IN SOUTH WEST AFRICA" CREATED BY THE PROLONGED NEGOTIATIONS.

7. COMMENT: GIVEN OVERLAPPING POLITICAL/TRIBAL LOYALTIES IN THE TERRITORY, IN ANY POLITICAL CAMPAIGN IN NAMIBIA, WHETHER UNDER UN SUPERVISION OR NOT, TRIBAL CLASHES ARE BOUND TO BE A PROBLEM. THE SAG HAS OF COURSE FOSTERED TRIBALISM, AND BECAUSE SWAPO IS PREDOMINATELY OVAMBO AND THERE ARE LARGE NUMBERS OF OVAMBO CONTRACT LABORERS THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY, IN AN ELECTION PERIOD FEAR OF OVAMBO DOMINANCE IS LIKELY TO BE EXPLOITED. IF AN ELECTION IS HELD WITHOUT SWAPO PARTICIPATION, THE MIGRANT OVAMBO WORKERS WOULD VERY LIKELY PLAY A ROLE IN THE PARTY'S ATTEMPT TO PROMOTE A GENERAL BOYCOTT OF THE PROCESS, AND COMMUNAL

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CLASHES WOULD ALSO RESULT.

8. IF THE SAG SHOULD OPT TO PROCEED UNILATERALLY WITH PREPARATIONS FOR ELECTIONS, IT WILL VERY LIKELY POINT TO THE RECENT INCIDENTS AS ONE OF ITS JUSTIFICATIONS FOR DOING SO.
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